

# **MORALE, WELFARE, AND RECREATION (MWR)**

On behalf of the MWR employees, we thank you for your support and welcome you home.

The following information is provided to assist your reintegration. If you have any questions or need assistance that isn't outlined below, please call the MWR Admin Support Branch at 706-545-4060.

- **POV Storage Recovery**

For those who have your POV stored at the Outdoor Recreation facility on Gillespie Street, the following procedures are provided to recover your vehicle:

1. Coordinate with your unit POC to ensure your driver's license, vehicle insurance and registration are current. The unit POC will also coordinate transportation to the MWR POV storage area.
2. A picture ID will be required to recover your vehicle. A final inspection sheet will be completed at the time of vehicle recovery.
3. The POC for POV recovery is Bill Place, Manager, MWR Outdoor Equipment Checkout, 706-545-7978.

- **Child Care Services**

Child Care services will be provided in support of reintegration/reunion activities as outlined below. Coordination for these services will be handled through the unit contracted FRG Assistant/Liaison and the MWR Child and Youth Services (CYS) Outreach Director at 706-545-9461.

1. Welcome Home Care Card – Five hours of free child care per child will be provided during the first 45 days of the Soldier's return from deployment. Child care will be provided in a CYS operated setting at no cost.
2. Child Care Services for Reintegration/Reunion Briefings - Free childcare services will be provided for Soldiers and spouses to attend reintegration/reunion briefings.

- **Welcome Home Day Celebration**

To show our appreciation for your support and to welcome you home, MWR will host a “**Welcome Home Day**” celebration for returning Soldiers and their families. More information will be provided.

- ❖ **When:** On Saturdays – dates to be determined.
- ❖ **Where:** Fort Benning – location to be determined.
- ❖ **What:** Welcome Home Day celebration with the following:
  - ✓ Free Food and Beverage
  - ✓ Entertainment (band, entertainers, and attractions)
  - ✓ Children’s Activities and Inflatables
  - ✓ Free Giveaways (to include vehicles)
  - ✓ Fireworks



## Fort Benning Schools Reunion Information

The reunion phase actually begins a couple of weeks before the parent's return as the child begins to anticipate the reunion. Children feel a mixture of excitement and fear during this time. They will be wondering what the reunion itself will be like and questioning: "How has Mommy/Daddy changed?" "Will he recognize me?" "Will she know who I am?" This phase can actually be the most difficult for children, so support from parents and teachers is especially crucial as the deployment nears its end.

### Parents

Parents should thoroughly discuss the homecoming with their children. Both the deployed parent and the caregiver should raise the subject with children in advance of the reunion so children will have a chance to prepare for the return.

- Caregivers, talk with your children about their excitement and concerns. Let them know it's normal to be nervous. Talk about all the updates children can share with the returning parent and guess what she/he may have to share with you.

- Plan special events and activities for the deployed parent's return. Creating handmade "welcome home" signs and planning to cook a favorite food or meal will help make the upcoming reunion seem more real. If children have an important project or event coming up in school, make plans to involve the deployed parents when they return.

- Deployed parents should express their excitement to be with their children again. Tell them what has changed about you. Let them know you can't wait to see and hear about their changes — a new haircut, new friends, their new favorite book, or subject in school.

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reunion

[www.militarychild.org](http://www.militarychild.org)

### **Educators**

Teachers should note the date of parents' returns and pay special attention to the affected students during the time surrounding the reunion.

Reunions, though happy, are stressful for the whole family. Children might assume that everything will be exactly as it was before. Let them know that it will take time for everyone to adjust and that this is part of the process. Anticipate that it may take several weeks for things to settle into a new routine.

When things have settled down, set aside a special time to talk about school. Look over old homework and tests. Talk about ways to be involved in ongoing and future school projects. Children will have established a pattern of going to the parent that stayed home for educational support. Caregivers should encourage children to seek help from both parents. The returning parent should make a special effort to discuss school and school activities; by talking about it, children will see that it is important to you.

Create a special project that allows students to express their feelings: make a welcome home card or write a letter about "The Things I Missed Most About You" or "Why I'm Proud of My Daddy/Mommy."

Discuss new behavior during this period with the student's caregiver. If possible, talk or write to the deployed parent about concerns you have so they have the information before they return home.

Invite the returned parent to class. The whole class can benefit from hearing about the parent's trip. This also contributes to a students' sense of pride in their parents and the difficult job that he or she completed.

If a student seems especially apprehensive consider planning a counseling session so the student to talk about his or her concerns, or invite the counselor to talk to the class about reunions.

*I am the daughter of a Soldier.*

*I am afraid,*

*to see him in uniform, to watch him practice for the unthinkable, to hear the planes of war overhead, knowing that one day the call will come to take my Daddy away.*

*I am the daughter of a Soldier.*

*I am proud,*

*to know what my father represents is good, who he protects is innocent, and the ones that he fights are evil.*

*I am the daughter of a Soldier.*

*I am strong,*

*I must be willing to give my father to those who need him more, ignoring the pain in my heart when he must go.*

*I am the daughter of a Soldier.*

*I have courage,*

*when I look into my father's eyes,*

*I see his courage.*

*I see his pride.*

*I see his strength.*

*I see what no else can see,*

*I see my father.*

**By Haylee, 8<sup>th</sup> grade, Kaiserslautern  
Middle School, Germany**

## **Deployment Reunions and Children**

Deployment reunions and reintegration are a process, not an event. The process requires time and effort. Stress levels may remain high up to seven months post-deployment. School is a setting that remains the same for the child of a deployed parent. Therefore, it is an important part of their life. Families and schools working together help children adjust to the changes inherent in deployment reunions and reintegration.

### **Tips for Parents:**

- Talk with your children before the service member comes home much as you did when the parent was preparing to leave.
- Tell your child's teacher about the return of the military parent from deployment.
- Use the services of the Family Support Center and Army Community Service to help address the special challenges of wartime deployment reunions and reintegration.
- Know that children's behavior will greatly depend on how their parents renegotiate, compromise, and communicate.
- Take care to avoid abruptly shifting love and attention from the children to the returning spouse.
- Help children understand that they have changed while the parent was away, AND that the parent has changed, too. Assure them that even though the parent may look or act differently than the child remembers, the returning parent is their same father or mother that left, and that he/she still loves them.
- Understand that children may experience a variety of feelings-

**Happy** that they will be seeing the parent again.

**Afraid** that the parent won't like the way they have changed, or that the parent will leave again.

**Excited** about being able to share some of their favorite activities again.

**Proud** that their parent is doing an important job for our country.

**Jealous** of the time and attention taken from them that is now given to the returning parent.

**Worried** that all these feelings are not normal.

- Know that the children may not respond to discipline from the returning parent because of loyalty to the parent that remained behind. Children may test the limits of the family rules to find out how things may have changed with the return of the deployed parent.
- Go slowly and let the children set the pace in accepting the parent back. Plan some special time for just the child and the returning parent to get reacquainted.
- Take care of yourselves and your relationship so that you are available for your children.

**Tips for School Personnel:**

- Utilize materials provided by Family Support Center and Army Community Services with students to assist them with the deployment reunion process.
- Communicate with parents if new concerning behaviors are displayed. Children are good indicators of what is happening in the family.
- Understand that the unification process occurs during the three-to-four weeks following the return of the deployed parent, and the reintegration phase occurs after that. Be patient with families as they work through this process.
- Listen as children talk about the coming home experience.
- Allow children to miss school to spend time with their reunited family with no penalties.

**Tips for Children:**

- Make a special card or sign to welcome your parent home.
- Write a letter to your returning parent and tell of the ways you have changed. Ask how he or she has changed, too.
- Share your parent's time with other family members.
- Be patient if things seem uneasy at first. Everyone will need to adjust.